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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6422
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 002513

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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WAYNE TO ARGENTINA; US LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS;
NICARAGUAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS; US-MEXICAN BORDER FENCE;
11/07/06

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

All major papers report on the arrival of US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, and his presentation of credentials to Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana. Other international stories include today's US legislative elections; the outcome of Nicaraguan presidential elections; and the US-Mexican border fence.

2. OPINION PIECES

- "Gestures from the new US Ambassador"

Oliver Galak, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (11/07) "With the typical signs of good will of every inauguration, the 28th US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, took office yesterday in a meeting with FM Jorge Taiana.

"At the end of the meeting, Wayne labeled his conversation with Taiana as 'good,' and he pointed out that 'the US greatly values its ties with Argentina'...

"... One of Ambassador Wayne's priorities in Buenos Aires will be taking care of US investment - nearly 25 percent of foreign investment in the country...

"But the common agenda also includes other issues, like the struggle against terrorism, human rights policy, the situation in Haiti, and the relationship with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

"... In Argentine diplomatic circles, Wayne's arrival was taken as good news...

"A long-time Argentine diplomat said: '(Wayne) is a heavyweight. He has direct channels of communication with (Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice. If we have a good cause and we convince him, he is the adequate channel.'

"A foreign ambassador who met Wayne while he served in the US was even more eloquent: 'Wayne has more influence in Washington than, for instance, Lino Gutierrez. Whatever he says will be respected there.'"

- "New US Ambassador arrives with promises to improve the (bilateral) relationship"

Leading "Clarín" reports (11/07) "Committed to increasing bilateral cooperation, the new US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, presented his credentials to FM Jorge Taiana.

"... Wayne will face the challenge of improving ties between

Kirchner and his US counterpart, George W. Bush, who is resentful after the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas, in which the US was not able to win support for the FTAA.

"... The US diplomat said yesterday that he will put 'all his effort into strengthening ties' between the two countries."

- "Wayne takes office as US Ambassador"

Business-financial, center-right "Infobae" (11/07) "After a meeting with FM Taiana, the new US Ambassador to Argentina Earl Anthony Wayne said that 'the US greatly values its bilateral relationship with Argentina.'

"Wayne's inauguration raises big expectations due to the particular situation in the region and the bilateral issues pending between the two countries, such as increasing US investment in the country.

"... However, the US diplomat acknowledged that the US and Argentine governments have 'points of disagreement' on some issues, which he considered 'normal between friends and neighbors.' He added 'the question is how to better channel those points of disagreement and how to face them to mutual benefit.'"

- "Taiana receives the new US Ambassador"

Business-financial "El Cronista" reports (11/07) "The new US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, asserted that the (US) ties with the country are 'very positive and productive,' and that the White House 'highly values' its relationship with Argentina.

"When presenting credentials to FM Jorge Taiana, Wayne underscored: 'We have a broad agenda of issues, and I will certainly do everything I can to increase the good communication and cooperation that we currently enjoy.'

"... Argentina is concerned about what will happen with the GSP at the end of the year."

- "The new American friend"

Left-of-center "Pagina 12" reports (11/07) "Even though the tone of the meeting was marked by protocol, after presenting credentials to FM Jorge Taiana, the new US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, pointed out that they held 'a good conversation about the bilateral relationship,' and he even asserted that 'it is in the interest of the two countries to broaden our channels of communication and deepen the understanding between the two nations.'

"Yesterday, the brand-new Ambassador announced that it will be important for him to meet 'with Argentines from all circles and listen to their points of view.'"

- "US Ambassador presents credentials"

Conservative "La Prensa" reports (11/07) "The new US Ambassador Earl Anthony Wayne took office yesterday after meeting with FM Jorge Taiana...

"... In his swearing in ceremony last November 2, Wayne had emphasized that the US and Argentina have a 'strong commitment to democratic values, human rights and defense.'

"He added that 'Argentina and the US have had good cooperation at the UN in seeking peace, non proliferation and fighting crime, terrorism and narco-trafficking.'

"Wayne recalled that 'there are almost 400 US corporations operating in Argentina,' which 'make our economic ties substantial' and have been kept 'through good and bad times.'"

- "US ambassador presents his credentials"

Liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald" reports (11/07) "The new US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, yesterday presented his credentials to FM Jorge Taiana. According to Embassy

sources, Wayne also had his first day of work at his new office in the neighborhood of Palermo. Wayne, whose last position was Assistant Secretary of State for Commercial Affairs and has previous experience in diplomacy, replaces Lino Gutierrez as the representative of George W. Bush in Buenos Aires."

- "New US Ambassador"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" reports (11/07) "... Ambassador Wayne's nomination raises big expectations due to the special current situation of the region and the issues pending in the bilateral relations, such as the lack of interest of US corporations to invest in the country and the Bush administration's imminent decision to withdraw Argentina from the GSP, for which the country could lose exports to the US for up to 600 million dollars."

- "Americans will vote today in a crucial election test for Bush"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (11/07) "... According to latest opinion surveys, the Bush administration will suffer its first political defeat, Democrats will win the Lower House and the gubernatorial races, and there will be a tie in US Senate. The final outcome will be known today...

"The electoral campaign made one thing quite clear. Voters will vote bearing one issue in minds - Iraq. And this alone is an achievement for the Democrats.

"... Chuck Todd, a well-known political analyst in Washington, agrees with other analysts that Democrats managed to turn these elections into a referendum on Bush's policy on Iraq."

- "From a rifle to pacifism and market economy"

Pilar Conci, on special assignment in Managua for daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (11/07) "He is perseverant, no one can deny this. His obsession was returning to power and, no matter how many defeats he endured on the way, he had made it this time.

"... While now he says that he will respect private corporations, boost foreign investment and seek good ties with the US, his proximity to Hugo Chavez worries Washington, which does not trust in his conversion.

"However, what has obviously changed is Ortega's banking account balance. Once a revolutionary, he has now become a wealthy businessman..."

- "US cautious and concerned about the outcome of (Nicaraguan) elections"

Leonardo Mindez, on special assignment in Washington for leading "Clarín," writes (11/07) "After having strongly bet against Daniel Ortega's candidacy, caution prevailed in Washington officials' comments on Nicaraguan elections.

"The main US fear is that the Sandinist leader will turn into an anti-US leader in Central America, a region that has been very close to the White House in recent years.

"... Many in Washington do not trust the old enemy of the Cold War. US Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez had already warned before the elections that a victory by Ortega could scare away US investment amounting to 270 million dollars and could jeopardize the continuity of CAFTA. Republican legislators even asked that the US suspend its financial aid for Nicaragua if Ortega won elections."

- "A light version"

Paula Lugones, columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (11/07) "Will Daniel Ortega be a new member of the 'axis of evil,' the list of US enemies? It is hard to tell. The victory of the former commander worries Washington, but it could well be a gut-driven reaction to the word 'Sandinismo.' It is true that Hugo Chavez is smiling from Venezuela and that the White House is monitoring possible capital flight from Nicaragua in fear of some kind of expropriation wave

similar to that of his first term in office. Ortega could well maintain his anti-imperialist stance but his ideological and personal transformation brings a new light, 'pragmatic' Sandinismo to power, which no longer plans to confront the US but sign FTAs with the US."

- "Bush's campaign failed and left a bad precedent"

Luis Bruchstein, columnist of left-of-center "Pagina 12," opines (11/07) "... Bush's staff campaigned against Ortega. The US Ambassador to Nicaragua called on the two right-wing political parties to ask them to unite, sent Mario Vargas Llosa to give lectures and North himself asked to vote for the right wing... His presence created the threat of another war. It has been the Bush administration's most shameless interference in the domestic issues of a Latin American country.

"Regardless of what they say of Ortega, the Nicaraguans' democratic vote defeated them all."

- "What stops the fence"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" carries an op-ed story by columnist Jorge Rosales, who writes (11/07) "The controversy regarding the construction of a fence on the US-Mexican border aimed at stopping immigration is only one aspect of the profound ongoing debate on this issue...

"... When the most recalcitrant US sectors praise the construction of a fence on the US-Mexican border..., they do not explain the economic benefits immigrants leave in the country year after year.

"It is not by chance that this tough measure has been adopted at election time, when extreme positions are required to maintain the loyalty of the most conservative sector of voters now that President Bush's clout is lower as difficulties in Iraq mount.

"The US ability to maintain its competitiveness largely depends on the number of workers it incorporates to its economy...

"The debate about the fence in the US is then much broader than the xenophobia of some US sectors. It should also include the responsibilities of the leaders of our countries - who have not contributed to generating the political, economic and social conditions that could alleviate the poverty in which millions of Latin Americans are immersed..."

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WAYNE